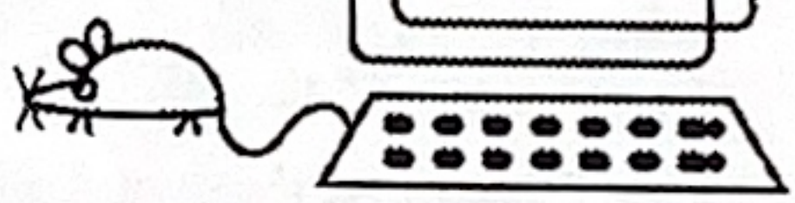
ASIFA EAST
The International Animated Film Society

ANYMATOR

October 2001 Issue



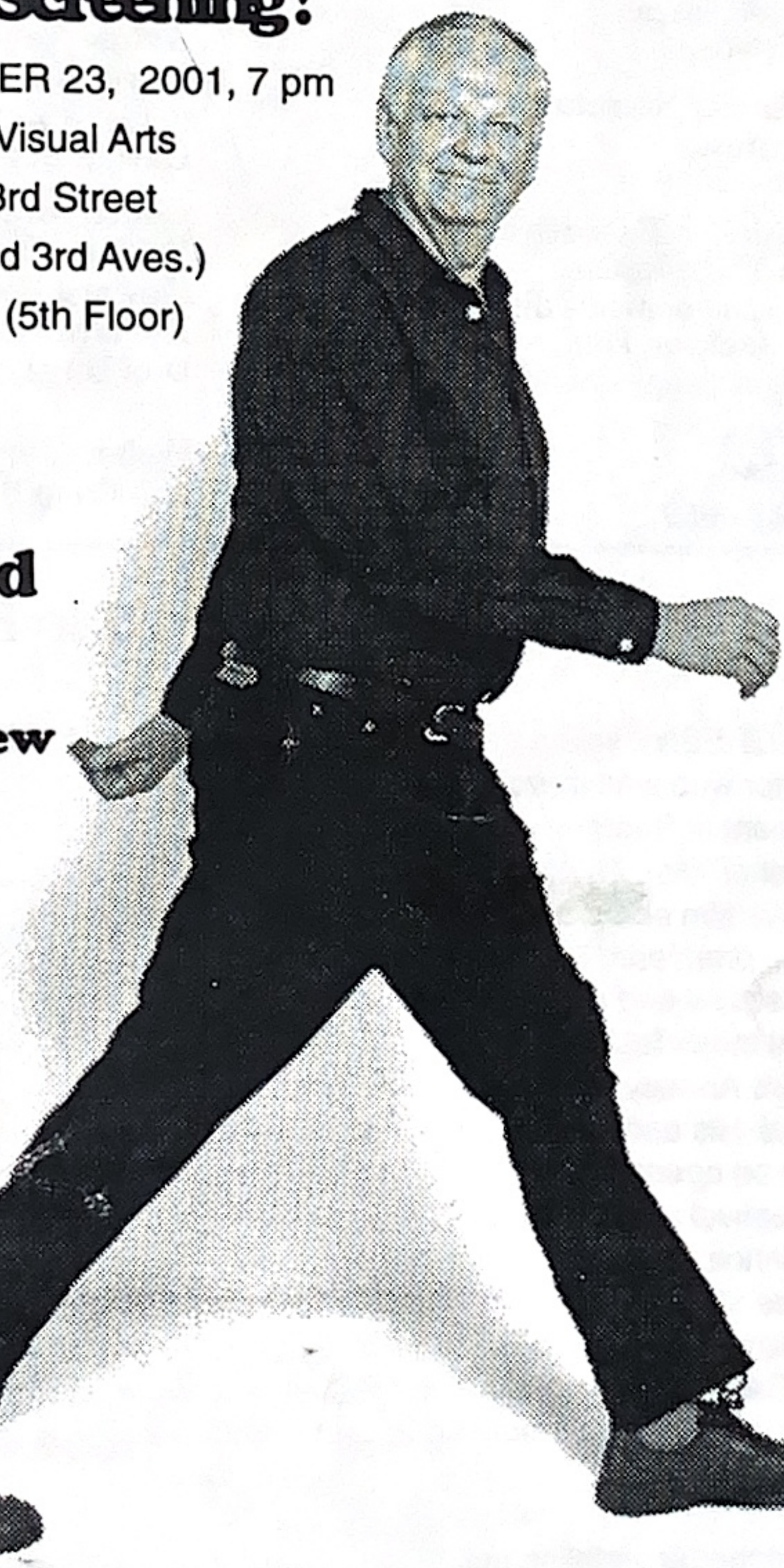
ASIFA EAST October Event

The Open Screening!

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 23, 2001, 7 pm
School of Visual Arts
209 E. 23rd Street
(bet. 2nd and 3rd Aves.)
Room 502 (5th Floor)

Catching Up with Richard Williams

***exclusive interview inside**



ASIFA East

The International Animated Film Society Northeast /New York Chapter

A Program of the New York Foundation For The Arts

President:
David B. Levy
c/o Blue's Clues
1633 Broadway 4th fl
New York, NY 10019

e-mail: David.Levy@nick.com
Call: (212) 654-6859
Fax: (212) 654-4720

Vice President/Programming:
Barbara Kearney
(212) 654-6184

Membership Secretary:
Ila Abramson
(212) 654-3649

International Executive Board:
Antran Mangoonian
Antran.Mangoonian@disney.com
Wendy Jackson Hall
wendy@jacksonhall.com

Treasurer:
Toni Ty$en
(212) 722-0069

Executive Board

Ila Abramson
Howard Beckerman
Iris Beckerman
Anne Bobroff-Hajal
Dale Clowdis
Tissa David
Don Duga
John Gati
Barbara Jean Kearney
Nancy Keegan
Ray Kosarin
Candy Kugel
David Levy
Bill Lorenzo
Z. Peter Mitchell
Jennifer Oxley
Anthony Peters
Maria Scavullo
Linda Simensky
Michael Sporn
Toni Tysen
Tom Warburton

Acting Newsletter Editors:
David B. Levy & Dale Clowdis
(212) 654-6859
David.Levy@nick.com

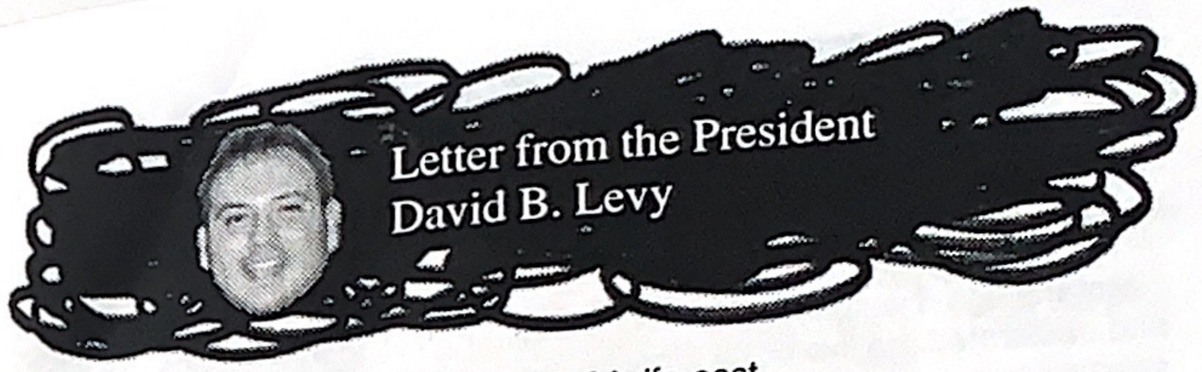
Contributing Staff:
Barbara Kearney, Linda Simensky, Howard Beckerman, Michael Sporn, Richard Gorey, Jr., John Canemaker, Don Duga, Dean Lennert

Webmaster: Tarik Cherkaoui
tarik@inorbit.com

Sad News from ASIFA San Francisco

BILLY GREENE was a stop-motion animator who was murdered in front of his apartment in September in Emeryville. His latest short film, Thought Bubble, a sensitive film about a down-and-out street person, premiered at the 2001 Sundance Film Festival and went on to be screened at several major festivals in Brazil, Korea, at France's Annecy and by the New York Film Festival. His earlier short Malfunction was shown on opening night of the 1998 Film Arts Festival and went on to be show at Slamdance. His commercial career includes stints at 181 Productions in New York, Clayart Trickfilm Studio in Frankfurt, Germany and Will Vinton Studio in Portland where he worked on the PJs. He returned to the Bay Area 5 weeks before his death to work on Phantom Investigators, a stop-motion series being produced in San Francisco by Wholesome Products for Warner Bros. TV.

--- karlcohen@earthlink.net

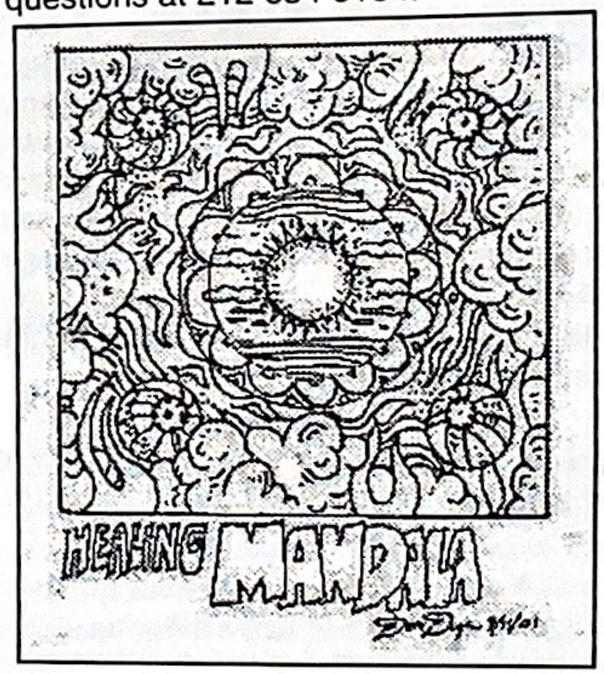


To all the members, friends and family of Asifa-east,

Our deepest sympathies go out to all of the victims of the terrorist attack and the courageous rescue effort of September 11, 2001. In response, we at ASIFA-East would like to propose that animators contribute a short (30 seconds to one minute) film presenting their own statement or thoughts on the recent events. [As the NY chapter, in a sense, it is our responsibility to reflect on film our feelings about what has happened.]

The main purpose of "Statement" is to express reaction to the terrorist attack and possibly to offer hope and inspiration to all people and especially to those who have suffered from the results.

The deadline is February 1, 2002. Films should be sent or delivered to Barbara Jean Kearney at MTV Animation 1633 Broadway 31st floor NY, NY 10019. The films made for "Statement" would also be eligible for entry into our yearly festival (deadline sometime in early March). At this time, we are still deciding on whether to feature the films to open the festival or to give them their own special screening. Stay tuned for more information. My thanks go out to Howard Beckerman for conceiving this idea and to Linda Simensky, Michael Sporn, Nancy Keegan and Barbara Kearney for helping to shape it. Give Barbara a call w/ any questions at 212 654 6184.



VIEW POINT AIEM

by Michael Sporn

Months ago, I watched CNN. A building in Palestine was in ruins. A bomb had obliterated the five or six story building, and the workers – they all seemed to be old – were digging away trying to find what survivors there were. I wasn't even listening to the story being narrated, but the image – particularly of one elderly woman, in black, crying and digging with her hands – stuck with me. When things seemed to get rough, somehow that image came back without my trying very hard.

Needless to say, this foreshadowed the larger buildings destroyed in New York last week. Another CNN image of a plane going from the top of the screen full on, into the flat wall of the second tower, was horrible. The stills in the NY Times (on line) of people jumping – in close-up – to escape the heat of the fire were too much. It was all too disturbing and left me wholly enervated.

But somehow that image of the woman in the Mid-East came back frequently during my Twin Tower thoughts. It seems that, all over the world, people are being bullied by others. Lots of people have been harassed and attacked, and it isn't about to stop. Anger and misery go hand in hand in this world, and all I seem to be able to do is sit and watch. We watch our President call for "Wanted Dead or Alive" Posters, and his anger only makes me feel more miserable.

The NEW YORKER cover for this week (Sept 17) is by Art Spiegelman. It's brilliant. At first I thought it was an all black page. A statement in itself and a comment on the magazine's printing no other cartoons (for the first time ever). But no, there were the two towers at about a 95% grey against the 100% black. The shadow of those buildings seemed to be spread across the black page. This is art; it really is! Of course, that's the answer. ART. I've started working on a film for myself and hope that will help me cope with the images of people in black digging. I hope that others out there who were touched will also put it into art. Maybe painting, music, magazine covers and animation will come to life with renewed vigor expressing hope for the future. Maybe the shadow of the twin towers will live in art.

Dave Levy's suggestion of making a filmed statement of our thoughts is a good one. I hope a lot of animators in New York participate. I will.

Greetings from the South by Linda Simensky

Today is September 22, and that means I have had about six or seven months to prepare my column for the newsletter. Incidentally, it's due today, but like everyone, I write best under extreme deadline pressure. On the other hand, anything I might have written before September 11 might seem incredibly out of date right now. And anything I might have written in the past few days could also seem out of date by the time you read this.

Back in early September, as the ASIFA-East "fall semester" was commencing, I was thinking about what I would write about and was wavering between variations on my usual two pet topics. One was the WAC business conference and why I found my panel boring. The other topic I was starting to think about was how there is much less work going on in the animation industry right now, and what were all those people who started in the mid to late 1990s in the industry going to do now? I may revisit the second topic some day, but since I have no easy answers, acknowledging the issue may be the best I can do right now.

Like most everyone else, my mind right now is only on the current events of the day, and I have found it impossible to think of much else. On September 11, I arrived at work as I would on any day. Each day, I sit down at my desk, review my "to do" list, figure out what to do for the day, and then get distracted and never go back to the list. Then I spend my day dealing with storyboards, development, and whatever might be going wrong at that moment. But this Tuesday was different, and like many people, I spent the entire day sitting in front of the news. We had several television sets on at work, each on a different channel, each showing the same horrifying images. A storyboard sat on my desk for three days, untouched. E-mail went unanswered, (as it so often does,) but rather than feeling guilt about not answering it, I simply felt like I had nothing to say. I used e-mail over the next two days to check on friends and colleagues who might have been in the area at the time. They were all okay. A few people who worked in the area were running late that day, and I realized that sometimes running late can be a really handy thing to do.

I tried not to watch TV, but could not pull myself away. No mail came in for the next three days, so there was no deadline-related work to do anyway. Not that I could think about anything else. I couldn't concentrate, and nothing seemed funny anyway. How could I ever work on cartoons again, I thought. Was anything going to seem funny again? I cancelled a trip to NJ that I was about to make. I felt anxious, and had no idea what to do. One of the shows that I work on is Justice League. I thought about how Superman and Martian Manhunter would have known how to handle a crisis like this.

Then I started wondering, how long was I going to feel this way? I never have trouble making sarcastic comments. But the same things weren't funny anymore. We started going through the list of shows that we air, to make sure there wasn't anything inappropriate that we were running. Luckily, the

broadcast standards rules keep us in check. However, one creator called to remind us of a scene he was concerned about -- one episode of "Grim and Evil" had a scene where Hector con Carne points a stink ray at New York. The cartoon showed people all over NY coughing and being repulsed by the green stink ray. We suddenly realized in horror that one scene cut to a cartoony wide shot of the WTC, with tiny little dots representing people hopping off the top of the WTC into the water to get away from the stink ray. What were the chances of having a cartoon with that very scene? What seemed to be a non-issue, back when the workprint came in a few weeks ago, was suddenly shocking. The creator was horrified. He cut the scene. I have always liked the references to NY in our cartoons. The cartoon where Courage the Cowardly Dog goes to NY is one of my favorites. But we decided we wouldn't air that one episode for the next few weeks. It could upset people.

I am still shocked by the enormity of what happened. Sometimes, it gets too hard to think about, like when you try to ponder time or infinity or black holes. But in the midst of all the tragedy, I had to stop and note that I was impressed by how New Yorkers handled themselves through the ordeal. In Atlanta, far from the activity, people were in shock. Most people in high rise office buildings were sent home. In our building, people rushed to get their kids out from school, and then went home to watch CNN. It got eerily quiet and somber, but that was about it. I can't even begin to imagine what many of you went through that day, but all of you up there should be commended for pulling through. Just living up in NY or NJ is suddenly an impressive feat to the rest of us.

In the past, when things have gone wrong at work, I have always joked that it's okay, as long as there's a story to tell when it's over. So now many of you have stories to tell. And as filmmakers and storytellers, and as people living in NY, many of you will have interesting perspectives on the events. And people do care what you think. When David Levy e-mailed me about the film project being proposed, I thought it was a great idea. Many of you will have so many thoughts and emotions that you must share with the world, to show other people what you saw, or at even to help them to cope. Sometimes, that what art and culture have to do. As artists, it becomes your responsibility to record your perceptions of these events through your films.

I hope that you are all doing okay through these rough times.

FREE LIFE DRAWING CLASSES

For ASIFA-East members and students at SVA 141 W. 21st St. Room 603 C From 7:00-10:00PM on Thursday nights

Any questions?

Contact Toni Tysen

(212) 722-0069

??? and AAA

An Interview with Richard Williams

- by Dean Kalman Lennert

Master Animator. Teacher. Three Time Academy-Award Winner. These are just a few titles and honors associated with Director, Richard Williams. Now, with his forthcoming book, THE ANIMATOR'S SURVIVAL KIT, he can add the title of author to that list. I recently had the chance to speak with Richard Williams about the book, his most recent Animation Masterclass and his opinions on the latest animation technology.

Before I begin, however, I would like to thank the members of ASIFA-East and the folks at Blue Sky Studios for contributing some wonderful questions to this interview.

Dean Lennert: I understand that you just recently had a Masterclass in Hong Kong?

Richard Williams: Yeah, and it went really well. I was very apprehensive because, I thought that with the cultural differences, will my so called humor work? And the answer is yes.

DL: Was the class predominantly traditional animators or computer?

RW: There were 150 students and only two of them were 2-D animators. One fellow used to work for me over here in England.

DL: I'm surprised that there weren't more Traditional animators from the studios that do the series work for the U. S.

RW: No. It wasn't that kind of thing. It was the government backing the development of animation in Hong Kong. And, of course, it's all on computer. So, they've got the equipment and they've got marvelous ideas but, they're missing pieces of information. So, I was the missing link, ya see, between the classical knowledge and the modern technology. They were very happy, saying that it was exactly what they wanted to get. It was very informal. A very enjoyable experience.

DL: How many Masterclasses does this make it?

RW: Hong Kong was number twenty. Well, we're trying to give them up you see. That's one of the reasons for doing the book.

DL: Oh, really?

RW: Yeah. I don't want to make a career of this thing. We started the masterclass because I didn't want to go back into the animation industry as such and I wanted to do my own work. As this is the information age and I've got all this information, Mo (Richard's Wife, Documentary Filmmaker Imogen Sutton) said, "Well, why don't you teach for a while?

DL: How has it been making the transition from being a student of animation masters like Milt Kahl, Ken Harris and Art Babbitt to teaching the next generation of animators?

RW: Well, none of my teachers, except for Art Babbitt, were actually teachers. Ken Harris would sometimes have a burst of eloquence but he'd usually have to show you on the drawing board. And with Milt, he just kept saying, "Well. You know. You know." I'd say, "No. I don't know." And then, finally, out would come the answer and I'd remember it. I have total recall of anything I'm interested in and no recall of anything I'm not interested in. (laughs) So, I can recall practically every conversation I ever had with Milt Kahl about animation so, it was easy. What was hard was to boil it all down so it's simple. I mean, it is simple really. All the information from the different guys nearly always comes out to the same thing. But, to get it down into a really simple phrase or drawing that covers it is the hard part.

Continued on next page

??? and AAA

Richard Williams (continued)

DL: Do you ever find yourself saying, "Oh, I wish I could ask Milt this" or "I wish I could run this by Ken or Art?

RW: No, truthfully. I never even think, "Now, how would Milt approach this? " I mean, I just think, "How would I approach this?" In fact when I do my own work I just don't think about it that way. The whole idea is to already have the knowledge absorbed into your bloodstream, and then it's just automatic. I mean a concert violinist doesn't think of the scales when he's playing. If he did he'd crash.

DL: Has the content or format of the Masterclass evolved over time?

RW: Yes. I think that it's much less spontaneous but I can get more information in now. As I keep doing it I get to be like a nightclub comic or an actor and I can tell when I'm not being clear enough and when they are getting it right away. I mean the whole thing is to be clear, isn't it? There's a lot of show business in it. I think that the answer is that I'm much better at it now and I don't have to sweat as much before I do it because I've done it so many times. And because of that I'm able to get more in.

DL: I've heard that you have some 35 volumes of notes you made from your mentors and teachers?

RW: Yeah.

DL: And that you boiled these down into ten volumes of what you considered to be the most important information?

RW: That's right. Ten volumes of a hundred pages each, which I did for Alex (Richard's Son) years ago when he got a job in Germany as an animator. And then that's boiled down into three hundred pages which I used for the classes. Then when I did the book I've sort of expanded it out. Not more information but, more examples of the same information. I didn't just use the three volumes. I went back through everything (laughs) which took forever.

DL: Did you find it a little more liberating working in book format than to have to cram everything into a three-day Masterclass?

RW: No. I actually found it much harder. Because I had to get everything absolutely right. In the class you might gloss over something without noticing, because of the shortage of time. Well, in the book it's got to be absolutely bombproof. So, I worked very hard to make sure everything is absolutely clear. It just took forever, three and a half years. I thought that it would take a year. I'm like a terrier, ya know. I just won't let go of the bone until it's done. And I think it's done. I'm happy with it. I'm very pleased that Faber (the book's publisher) allowed me to do it my way. I said to Mo at the end of it, "well this time I can't blame anybody. This is 352 pages of stuff and if there is anything wrong with it it's my fault. (laughs) That's it. Nobody screwed with it.

DL: Did you run across any stumbling blocks when putting the book together?

RW: No. I just found that I had an awful lot of material and yet it all had to get in. What was it Shakespeare says ? "More matter with less words". So, that was the hard part just to keep making it clear and getting it all in. I think I managed to keep it full of air and light. So, it's easy to look at, easy to read.

DL: Does the information in the book follow the structure of the masterclass?

RW: Yes. You could say that the masterclasses were rehearsals for the book. Although we didn't know it at the time.

DL: It has been observed that you bring a lot of energy and enthusiasm to your teaching style. How does this translate to the printed page?

RW: When we were checking the proofs Mo had picked up a whole bunch of them and she was reading them on the train and she said that my voice was so strong that, to her surprise, it was a page-turner. And I said, "What? During all that technical stuff? That can't be." I looked at it a couple of days ago, I got enough distance from it now, and I think, in ways, it's funnier than the class. Whatever it is I have to offer is definitely in there.

DL: Are there any recommended exercises in the book?

RW: No. Ya' know I hated school. I just hated school. Anything to do with the professorial, I've tried to get that out of there. I've put in my experience; here's the principle, this is how it works and this is how to use it. Use it your way. It's everything I've absorbed over the years. My experience and what I found to be true and what I found wasn't.

DL: Do you include many of your anecdotes?

RW: There's enough in there to give a feel for the background to all this knowledge.

Continued on next page

??? and AAA

Richard Williams
(continued)

DL: Are there any plans to have this book translated into other languages?

RW: I guess so but my hand written text is really part of the drawings. It's a mountain of art work and most of the text is embedded into the drawings like an artists's notebook. Also it's conversational not didactic.

DL: What are some of your non-animation related inspirations?

RW: Bix Beiderbecke (jazz cornetist, pianist and composer 1903-1931). I'm crazy about a lot of music but Bix is my favorite artist in any medium. Ever! Two notes of Beiderbeck and I'm off. He just kills me. And in movies Kurosawa is by far my most favorite. He's the master as far as I'm concerned. When I first saw RASHOMON I was 16, and I thought, "Oh! I see, movies are art! Or at least this man's movies are art. (Laughs.)

DL: You play the cornet, correct?

RW: Yeah, the Cornet and flugelhorn.

DL: What type of music do you like to play?

RW: I'm a kind of New York-Dixielander...whatever you call it. 1940's Dixieland, swing and mainstream. I used to play with Max Kaminsky, the great trumpeter in New York. He was my teacher and friend and he gave me on the job training.

DL: How often do you get out to play?

RW: At the moment I play three times a week. And I practice all the time. I had to cut the playing down a bit while doing the book.

DL: Do you find that there is a difference in expressing yourself through music vs. animation?

RW: Only in that it's immediate. You play and there's the sound. It flies into the air and it's gone. You can't play it back and you can't fix it. I just think of animation as drawn music. It's very similar, I mean the timing is similar - the passion, the contrast, how you join things together interestingly.

DL: When you started in the industry what was your vision for the future of animation ?

RW: Why I never had any, Dean. Never. And I still don't. I just think that it's such an amazing medium that, cripes, I wonder what I could do with it? Like the thing I'm on now. I've been thinking about it since I was 15. I was at that time giving up my earlier ambition to animate in favour of painting but I wondered if I became an animator would I ever be good enough to animate this idea here? So, now I am seeing if I am good enough. (laughs) We don't know yet.

DL: Would you have any interest in utilizing a computer or directing computer animators?

RW: I think if I was younger, yes definitely. I am doing it indirectly, I guess, since nearly everytime we have a masterclass it's a higher percentage of computer guys. There's usually about 20% average of 2-D now. In the beginning it was 80% 2D animators.

DL: What effect do you see these new tools having on the quality of the work?

RW: Oh, I think it's great! The computer guys are getting better and better at aping reality. That's marvelous that they can do it but, how much better it would be if you invent what can't be. I mean when was the last time you saw a really funny walk in animation like they did in the 1930's? Where the action itself was funny or fascinating? I think that's the place to go; step backwards and invent with modern technology.

DL: Do you feel that having the unlimited un-do option that a computer offers is a benefit or detriment to the mastery of the art form?

RW: Oh, benefit, benefit! But, everything in life is a double-edged sword isn't it? It seems to me that every time they invent a new thing they gain this terrific new thing and they also lose a little bit of something else. I certainly don't think that every new innovation is a step forward particularly. It's just a step different.

DL: With the success of SHREK this summer over some traditionally animated films, what are your thoughts about the future of 2-D animation?

RW: I think it should go graphic. I think it's a shame when the 2-D tries to look like 3-D because it can't. It shouldn't try to follow the fashion for this burgeoning, expanding computer thing, which is wonderful of itself. The 2-D should go do what it does best. The Sistine Ceiling is pretty impressive but, you can take a drawing of Michelangelo's and it is, in a way, more impressive than the painting in that you see his direct thinking. There's something good about an old master's preparatory drawing, before he does the painting. And the great stuff, say, Degas' last paintings. You know, those big chalk things of the women in the tub? He couldn't see very well at that point and they were rough as hell. They're the best things he ever did! And I think we should go that way. I think, because the computer thing can take over all the polished areas so beautifully, we 2D artists should just go back to a hand-crafted approach. Obvious drawings that walk and talk.

DL: Could you place the following aspects of animated film production in the order of most important to least important: Voice-Talent, Animation, Story, Production Design.

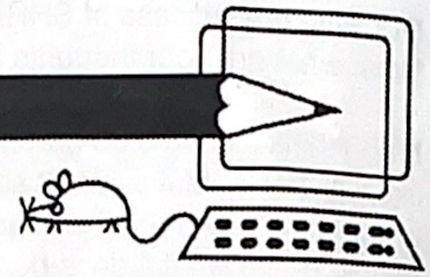
RW: Production Design is the least important. I would put Animation first but, only just ahead of Story. I think that stories are pretty easy to come by and most stories these days are just formulas. I think what you remember, or at least I remember in a movie, is the characters. If I think of SEVEN SAMURAI I don't think of the story I think of the seven different samurai. As Disney said to Frank Thomas, "Get the entertainment right." Then getting good Voices is absolutely vital. Take THE LION KING as a good example. The voices are marvelous and all utterly separate from each other in tone. With voices it's very important that they contrast each other. Laurel and Hardy; utterly, utterly different voices. Abbott and Costello. We have to separate the personalities into big and little, fat and thin, upper-class, lower-class. You've got to have contrast. Yeah, Production Design is way down the line. I think that's just giving it an interesting look. Although the whole thing should be organic, shouldn't it? Whenever I have an idea it's all of a piece. I couldn't separate it out.

DL: Are you planning to mark the occasion of Walt Disney's 100th Birthday with anything special?

RW: I'll be thinking of Milt Kahl's words: "I really loved that guy. He was the genius and we all knew it. Someone like that only comes once in a lifetime."

If you would like to pre-order Richard Williams' new book, here are some e-mail addresses: www.amazon.com, www.amazon.co.uk, www.chapters.ca

Book Review by Richard Gorey, Jr.



The Hand behind the Mouse by Leslie Iwerks and John Kenworthy

"Listen to this," I said to my friend as I read; "Not only did Ub Iwerks single-handedly draw the first Mickey Mouse cartoon, he perfected the sodium backing matte process, and invented wet-gate printing as well."

"Mmm-hmm," my friend said. "I was wondering where to send the thank you card."

Well, okay. Ub Iwerks isn't one of those widely-known film industry giants, like Steven Spielberg or Alfred Hitchcock. But to every one who studies animation and its' history, he's just as significant. Many people -including film historian Leonard Maltin and animator Shamus Culhane- have written about Iwerks before, quite eloquently. But a new book, by Iwerks' granddaughter and writer John Kenworthy, really gives an in-depth look at this prolific genius who has been called "Animation's forgotten man."

Iwerks' revered reputation as one of the fastest and most proficient animators of the early sound era would be enough to guarantee him a place in film history. His skill and draftsmanship during his early partnership with Walt Disney were -some said- the driving creative force behind the critical early days of the studio.

In fact, Disney so depended on Iwerks' talent and boundless energy that it's doubtful Walt could have produced and delivered on the early films he produced, including Oswald the Lucky Rabbit and Mickey Mouse, without Ub's input.

But increasing pressures to upgrade the films, and Walt's sometimes insensitive approach to getting the best out of Ub, soon led to their much-publicized breakup. The new biography notes one telling incident at a party in which a young boy approached Disney and asked him to draw a picture of Mickey Mouse, at which point Walt is said to have turned to Iwerks and asked, "Why don't you just draw one, and I'll sign it?" Yikes.

This kind of schism between Walt's singular genius and his inability to share credit seems to be one of the many complex factors which contributed to the defection of not only Iwerks, but several others in the Disney staff, when producer Pat Powers made Iwerks an offer late in 1929.

It's to Leslie Iwerks and Kenworthy's credit that their account of the breakup is both fair and objective. Wisely, they manage to detail the circumstances of the breakup without making Walt the villain.

The book is also very even-handed regarding Ub's reputation as an independent animation producer, and shrewd in assessing his strengths -and limitations- in that role.

Iwerks limitless understanding of the technical side of animation was staggering, but somehow this technical brilliance didn't translate into memorable films. His series Flip the Frog and Willie Whopper, while attractive and carefully rendered, leave little impression. Seen today, they're handsome but somewhat tedious affairs (though I have to admit, I feel the same way about some of the earlier Mickeys as well).

But if these carefully-executed films were Iwerks only legacy, it would be one thing. His many accomplishments after his return to the Disney studios (in 1940) are his true gifts to the film industry, and to moviegoers all over the world. One gets the sense that Iwerks was a dabbler, and, having gone as far as he was able as an animator, the role of a director no longer suited- or interested- him. Like Willis O'brien and Ray Harryhausen, Iwerks was primarily an artistic camera man and effects master. His most valuable gifts were revealed only after his studio closed, when technical challenges others were unable to solve became his most impressive accomplishments.

The new book lovingly and exhaustively details these breakthroughs, from the innovation of wet-gate printing (which eliminated scratches from existing footage) to the refinement of the enormously complex sodium-backing matte process. It was this process -which enabled chemical matte work with greater accuracy of color and clarity- that made possible not only the dazzling effects in Mary Poppins and Bedknobs and Broomsticks, but the chilling, still-impressive matte work in Hitchcock's The Birds. The advantage of the sodium process was that it rendered feathered edges like hair and blurs with great fidelity, eliminating the troublesome and conspicuous "matte lines" that had compromised previous process photography.

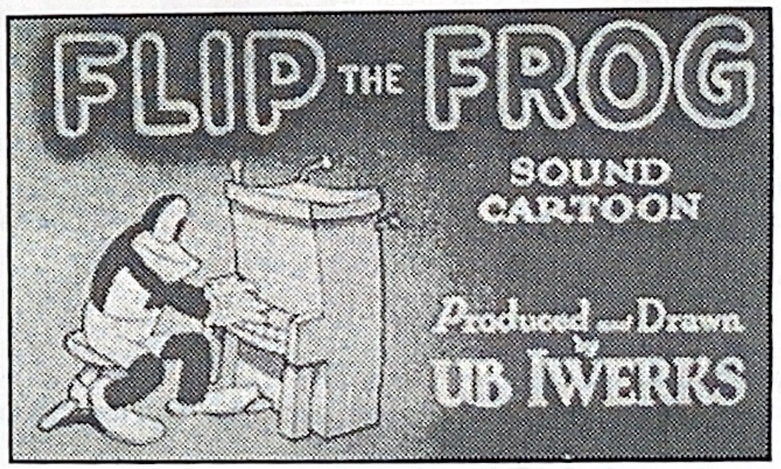
During his later tenure in Hollywood, Iwerks worked with some of the great directors and producers, and even assisted with the effects camera work on David O'Selznick's mammoth melodrama Duel in the Sun.

But it was at the Disney studio that Iwerks made his most indelible mark. An understanding of the complexities behind early Technicolor enabled him to enhance the famous "Pink Elephants" scene from Dumbo: his appreciation for color timing and lighting were a great asset to the True Life Adventures, in which several disparate negatives, shot at varying times and lighting conditions, were combined to make smooth and seamless nature documentaries. Iwerks return to the Disney studios must have been painful and humbling for him, yet judging from his achievements there, it was the place where his gifts could shine the brightest, and they did.

Despite their past differences, Disney was, in later years, very much a supporter and champion of Iwerks, telling Laurence Watkin "Gosh, he can do anything," and calling Ub a "natural engineering genius."

This genius came into prominence once again when Ub designed and perfected a process to render "Circle Vision" 360 degree films for the Walt Disney World theme parks. This and many other complex and useful inventions are the real Iwerks legacy. Even for the millions who've never heard his name, it's probable they've enjoyed his work, on more than one occasion.

Leslie Iwerks and John Kenworthy have written an affectionate, thoroughly researched book, which relies on many first hand sources and interviews to paint a worthy picture of a man who -time and again- gave his best to an industry that greatly needed men like him. What the movies didn't give back, perhaps, was recognition, something Ub may not have been as comfortable with as was Walt Disney himself.



Continued on next page

Iwerks' son Don recalls "In all of his work, my dad was one to put yesterday behind him. ...When people asked him 'Well, how do you feel that you created Mickey and you didn't get any credit?' He said 'It isn't creating it, it's what you do with it.'"
How very shrewd, and very true. Had it not been for Disney, many of Iwerks innovations and accomplishments might never have seen the light of day. But without Iwerks, there might not have been a Disney, or a Mickey Mouse. Think about it.
In The Hand Behind the Mouse, Mark Kausler tells of how he once rode an elevator with Ub and Walt Disney, in the late sixties. Kausler had written an article about Ub and was fascinated with his work and reputation as an animator. When Kausler complimented Iwerks on Flip the Frog, and asked a question about those earlier years, Ub responded, "Shhh, we don't talk about that around here."
Thankfully, someone finally has "talked about that". This long-overdue book about one of the true technical masters of the film industry is a must for every animation fan, and it belongs on every film history buff's shelf. Three cheers to Leslie Iwerks and John Kenworthy. The Hand Behind the Mouse is a great book about a great filmmaker.

WALT DISNEY'S NINE OLD MEN,
A NEW BOOK BY JOHN CANEMAKER

John Canemaker, one of America's most respected animation historians, is publishing his eighth book in October: the eagerly awaited WALT DISNEY'S NINE OLD MEN AND THE ART OF ANIMATION.

The large format book -- 9 1/4 wide X 12 1/4 long, 310 pages - is lavishly illustrated in color with original animation art, film frames, stills and family photographs. Canemaker, once again, brings a high level of historical detail, analysis and candor to the text, offering an intimate glimpse at the art and lives of the Nine, Walt Disney's core group of animators for nearly fifty years: Les Clark, Wolfgang Reitherman, Eric Larson, Ward Kimball, Milt Kahl, Frank Thomas, Ollie Johnston, John Lounsbery, and Marc Davis.

Two events are planned in New York City for WALT DISNEY'S NINE OLD MEN AND THE ART OF ANIMATION including:

Museum of Modern Art - Friday, October 26 at 6 pm.
A book signing and an illustrated lecture by Mr. Canemaker, which will conclude with a rare 35mm screening of Disney's 1953 feature PETER PAN (one of the films ALL the Nine Old Men worked on).
For more information phone MoMA at (212) 708-9400.

New York University Bobst Library (Fales section - 3rd floor) -
Thursday, Nov. 8 at 6:30 pm.
A reception for the author, plus a book signing, exhibition, and reading from DISNEY'S NINE OLD MEN. 70 Washington Square South.
For more information: phone Marvin Taylor, Fales Librarian (212) 998-2596.

The Asifa-East Annual Open Screening rears its ugly head once again, hosted by me, David Levy. Bring your finished films, commercials, works-in-progress and etc on 3/4" and 1/2" tape a half hour before the event starts. Be prepared to say a few words about your film, if you wish. You may recall that last years screening was so well attended that someone drank my water by mistake. This year I will be taking fluids by an intravenous drip hook-up to prevent any funny business. Due to increased security at SVA, everyone attending the Open Screening must be accompanied by at least one current member of Asifa-East. Asifa-East member names will be cross-checked by security on the main level of the building. Security is asking that photo IDs be shown at the door as well. Don't you feel safer already? I'll be personally frisking everyone at the door of room 502. Just kidding. I hope to see you all there.

MINUTES FROM THE OPEN ASIFA MEETING

Annecy, France, 6th June, 2001

Present Board members: Abi Feijo, President, Marco De Blois, Vesna Dovnikovic, Wendy Jackson Hall, Heikki Jokinen, Sayoko Kinoshita, Thomas Renoldner, Andy Wyatt.

Absent Board members: Pierre Azuelos, Antran Manoogian.

The others present: Edward Bakst and Susan Pivoda (ASIFA Colorado), Ton Crone (The Netherlands), Olivier Cotte (France), Robi Engler, Jonas Raeber and Beatrice Reichhart (ASIFA Switzerland), Mikhal Bak (AFCA-ASIFA France), Bill Dennis (ASIFA India), Nelson Shin (ASIFA Korea), Marilyn Zornado (USA), Pat R. Webb (ASIFA UK), Mikk Rand (Estonia).

Abi Feijo, ASIFA President, welcomed the present ASIFA members and representatives of ASIFA national groups. He stated that the aim of this meeting was to improve the communication between the ASIFA Board and national groups, as well as between national groups themselves.

The group representatives expressed their wish for better collaboration between groups,
for exchange of information, articles etc. Ton Crone mentioned the problem of translation when it comes to the exchange of articles. Thomas Renoldner thinks that groups could have their space in the ASIFA media with the texts in original languages. Robi Engler proposed a mailbox on the ASIFA Net for collecting the news. Those news can be translated, if not the complete text, than only a summary or one part. Nelson Shin offered 20 pages in each issue of his magazine "Animatoon" to ASIFA. Pat Webb thought that we had to be careful with publishing the information on the net, because, if everything was available to all, what would be the reason to become the ASIFA member. Marco De Blois spoke about the problems they have in Canada and about the efforts to organize ASIFA activities. Heikki Jokinen informed the members about the situation in Finland. Young people are more internationally minded than before and this international aspect of ASIFA is very important.

Edward Bakst was interested to hear the experiences of other groups in raising the funds for ASIFA. Robi Engler presented the situation with the Swiss group – their source of finances are government funding and membership fees. They have to apply for funds and give annual reports on their activities (training, magazine, participation at festivals).
Mikhal Bak reported about the remarkable activities of the French group - monthly screenings, magazine, printing the books...
ASIFA Austria is financed partly by government, partly from workshops and studio.

Abi Feijo thought that this meeting will be a new start of better communications between ASIFA Board and groups and among groups themselves. He proposed the list of national magazines to be published on the ASIFA Net. Groups can exchange articles with just titles or short summaries translated into their own language.
Thomas reminded the members of the Free Pages for ASIFA members on the ASIFA Net. The members has have to pay 10 USD initial money for installation, the rest is for free as long as they pay the ASIFA membership fee. So far he received 5 requests.

The representatives of ASIFA Austria and ASIFA Switzerland proposed the new organization of ASIFA - ASIFA as a federation of groups. Thomas Renoldner spoke about the absurd situation that some of the most active ASIFA groups don't have their representatives on the ASIFA Board. In his opinion that's the result of our election system where ASIFA members vote for people they don't know and just cross names on the voting list without having enough information about the candidates. .
The basis of ASIFA are groups and their activities. National groups must have their representatives on the Board and coordinate activities of the Board according to the needs of ASIFA groups.

Pierre Azuelos pointed out that the federation was not more democratic than our recent system. Maybe some kind of the mixed system would be better.

ASIFA must be the center of international exchange of information (Ton Crone) about the possibilities of education (information on animation schools), about festivals, projects, history. Pierre Azuelos thought ASIFA had to be the international survey place for animation and must fulfill its main goal – protection and promotion of the art of animation.
Mikhal Bak offered help and collaboration to ASIFA by giving information to ASIFA Net (for example, about festivals).

Members of ASIFA East,

Chris and I want to let your members know that our hearts are with them right now after the terrible devastation that your city has suffered. The grief that we are suffering cannot compare to what New Yorkers must be feeling.

Frankly, working on the festival seems ridiculous in light of this atrocious act of terrorism, instead we wish there was something we could do to help. We wish all of you the strength to get through this terrible time.

Yours truly,

Kelly Neall and Chris Robinson
The Ottawa International
Animation Festival

ANNOUNCEMENT

At this time of crisis, there is only so much that we as people can do: give blood, donate food and clothing. But as creative professionals, we have certain gifts and talents that other do not.

A Vision of Hope :the Hero's Fund, as the project is called, is going to be a collection of original comic art by creators all over the world. The plan is for the art to be auctioned off and the profits will be donated to relief efforts for the Washington and New York terrorist attacks.

Once you have a sketch or piece of artwork ready, please create a low-resolution JPG file and email it to Patrick@Komikwerks.com.

Ultimately this project will probably need to be coordinated through the publishers as they own these characters and their support will be needed and appreciated if we are to reach as many as possible. Thanks and I hope to hear from all of you soon. Feel free to pass this on to as many comics professionals as you can.

Thanks,
-Shannon Denton, Patrick Coyle

ASIFA EAST
c/o Michael Sporn Animation
632 Broadway
New York, NY 10012

*** TOONUP 2001**
Tickets Now Available but Time is Running Out!
Taking time from their pre-production work on Dragon's Lair the movie, Don Bluth and Gary Goldman will share their experience in animation production at 2 seminars this year. From script to screen, they will touch on the most important issues facing animation artists today.
The cornerstone of success in animation is your ability to get your ideas onto paper, or onto the computer screen. Join Don Bluth and Gary Goldman at one of their in depth animation seminars in Toronto at Sheridan College, September 15th & 16th or in San Francisco at the Expression Center for New Media, October 27th & 28th. Don and Gary will be sharing many demonstrations and techniques specifically designed to help improve your skills.
Don't miss it!
For more details go to: http://www.donbluth.com/toonup.html
call (888)363-8343 or e-mail: aimee@donbluth.com